

Under certain circumstances, fires set to train firefighters, to dispose of certain ignitable or explosive materials or to dispose of poisons such as pesticides and their containers, are allowed with prior written permission from Ohio EPA. Recognized horticultural, silvicultural, range or wildlife management practices involving burning also are allowed with prior written permission from the Ohio EPA. This permission may take two weeks to obtain.

How do I apply for an open burning permit?

Contact Mike Fair at HCDOES by phone at (513) 946-7711 or by email at mike.fair@hamilton-co.org two to three weeks in advance of your preferred open burning date to discuss the purpose of the fire. You can then receive the permit application by mail or download it from HCDOES' website at www.hcdoes.org.

The open burning permit application must receive approval from your local fire department before HCDOES will review it. This will notify the fire department of your intent to burn and allow for preparation in case of an emergency.

Fire departments intending to carry out live fire training must have structures inspected by an individual certified by the Ohio Department of Health for asbestos-containing material (ACM). A structure may not be burned if ACM of any kind is present. All ACM must be removed and the fire department must submit a Notification of Demolition to HCDOES at least 10 working days prior to the training.



What are the alternatives to open burning?

- Bring leaves, grass clippings, tree trimmings and other yard materials to yardwaste drop-off sites in your county.
- Set up a compost area in your backyard.
- Participate in curb-side or drop-off recycling programs.
- Check with your county's solid waste district to find out about recycling other materials such as plastic bags and household hazardous materials.

For more alternatives to open burning, please visit the U.S. EPA's open burning website at www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/urn/burnpg.html. To read the Ohio Administrative Code's open burning restrictions, please visit the Ohio EPA's website at www.epa.state.oh.us.

Some local municipalities may have their own rules regarding open burning. Please contact your respective municipality once you have received a permit from HCDOES.

Open burning can be harmful to yourself and others. When in doubt, please call HCDOES at (513) 946-7777 with any questions.

Thank you to the U.S. EPA and the Ohio EPA for information on open burning.



OPEN BURNING

A Guide to Open Burning Safely and Legally



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What is open burning?

The Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) defines open burning as any outdoor fire. With a few exceptions, most types of open burning are prohibited in Ohio. Open burning worsens the air quality in Southwest Ohio and can have harmful effects on people's health.

If you must open burn, contact the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services (HCDOES) for a permit application and notify your local fire department.

Why is open burning prohibited?

Open burning releases various harmful pollutants into the air. Exposure to some of these pollutants can lead to breathing difficulties and increased asthma attacks. Dioxin and furans, some of the most toxic compounds known, are also released during open burning.

Additionally, the increased presence of these pollutants makes the attainment of healthy air quality standards difficult. Open burning not only jeopardizes air quality standards, but also endangers the property and people near the fire. A change in wind direction or uncontrolled sparks can set fire to a building or cause severe bodily injury.

What are the health effects of open burning?

Open burning produces many airborne pollutants, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter, carbon monoxide and ash residue.

Inhaling certain VOCs can lead to eye, nose and throat irritation; headache; loss of coordination; nausea; and damage to the liver, kidneys and central nervous system.

Particulate matter can aggravate respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis, and has been associated with cardiac arrhythmia (heartbeat irregularities) and heart attacks. People with heart or lung disease, the elderly and children are at highest risk from exposure to particles.

Health effects (Continued)

At low levels of exposure to carbon monoxide, humans may experience a variety of neurological symptoms including headache, fatigue, nausea and vomiting.

Ash residue can contain poisonous metals such as mercury, lead, chromium and arsenic. These metals can be toxic when ingested. When a person ingests hazardous amounts of lead, for example, he or she may experience high blood pressure, cardiovascular problems, kidney damage and brain damage.

What are the exceptions?

The OAC allows the following burning exceptions: cooking for human consumption (e.g. barbecues), heating tar, welding torches, smudge pots and heating for warmth for outdoor workers.

You must receive permission from the Ohio EPA to set a fire in restricted and unrestricted areas.

Restricted areas include:

- within the boundaries of any municipal corporation;
- within the boundaries of any municipal corporation; within corporation limits and a 1,000 foot zone outside any municipal corporation having a population of 1,000 to 10,000; and
- within corporation limits and a one-mile zone outside any municipal corporation with a population of more than 10,000.

Within a restricted area, open burning for the following purposes can occur with prior notification:

- Prevention or control of disease or pests.
- Ceremonial fires no larger than five feet by five feet and lasting no more than three hours.
- Disposal of agricultural waste generated on the premises.

Outside a restricted area, the following types of wastes generated on the premises can be burned with prior notification:

- Agricultural wastes: any matter generated by crop, horticultural or livestock production practices.
- Landscape wastes: plant matter such as tree trimmings, branches, stumps, brush, weeds, leaves, grass, shrubbery, yard trimmings and crop residues.
- Land-clearing wastes: plant matter which is removed when land is cleared for residential, commercial or industrial development. This material may be burned only under certain circumstances and with prior written permission from HCDOES.
- Residential waste: wastes such as wood or paper products that are generated by one-, two-, or three-family residences. **Garbage may not be burned.**



No open burning can take place within 1,000 feet of an inhabited building located off the property where the fire is set. Nor can the fire obscure visibility for roadways, railroad tracks or air fields.

No wastes generated off the premises may be burned. For example, a tree trimming contractor may not haul branches and limbs to another site to burn them.

Open burning is prohibited when air pollution warnings, alerts or emergencies are in effect.